



December 18, 2013

TO: STATE GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY REVIEW COMMITTEE

FROM: IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

RE: STATE EMPLOYEE EFFICIENCY SUGGESTIONS AND BOARD AND COMMISSION REVIEW

Reduce Cost and Increase Efficiency

The State Government Efficiency Review Committee has requested that all agencies “seek input from your employees asking them for any ideas that will reduce costs and increase efficiency in state government”

The Department of Public Safety is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). As such we conduct yearly staff inspections which consist of a one on one interview with all employees. As part of this interview employees are asked about their impressions of the department as a whole and what they believe can be done to make the department run better. We used the information from these staff interviews to inform our report on how the Department of Public Safety can institute cost savings, to the state, and increase efficiencies.

Division directors were also charged with putting together a strategic plan for their divisions. The goals of the strategic plans included, but were not limited to, finding ways to reduce cost and improve efficiencies. These strategic plans were also used to inform the Department of Public Safety’s response to the State Government Efficiency Review Committee’s request.

By reviewing the staff interviews and the directors strategic plans the Department has identified a few key areas in which cost savings and efficiencies can be achieved. They include:

Energy Efficiency

- The Department of Public Safety should focus on working toward more energy efficient building infrastructure and vehicle fleet. Currently, the laboratory for the department of criminal investigation (DCI) is “Leadership in Energy Efficient Design” (LEED) certified. A LEED certified building provides energy savings which equates to cost savings over the long run. The laboratory design should set the standard for other departmental buildings. The Department should look at energy efficiencies when purchasing, building, or remodeling departmental infrastructure for the long term cost savings associated with heating, cooling, and operating the facility.
- The department is also looking at energy savings in its fleet vehicles. A large portion of the State Patrol’s budget is spent on fuel each year. By purchasing more fuel efficient vehicles, which still meet the performance standards required for a state patrol vehicle, there can be a substantial cost savings to the state. State Patrol has transitioned from the Crown Victoria to a Dodge Charger, which is more fuel efficient. The Department of Public Safety is also looking at using vehicles that have smaller engines for the divisions which do not require high performance vehicles as part of their job duties.

Simplified Purchasing and Hiring

- The Legislature should reevaluate the centralized purchasing and hiring mechanism, currently set up through the Department of Administrative Services, to allow for better efficiencies. The original goal of centralized purchasing was to increase efficiencies; however, the Department of Public Safety has experienced increased expenses, redundancies, and time delays along with unnecessary consulting fees all of which equate to increased costs to the state.
- Managers should have more independence in the civilian hiring process to prevent the delays incurred by being required to work through a deep chain of command, extending outside the department to the Department of Administrative Services, before hiring. These delays cause the department to lose out on qualified employees. A department’s ability to more efficiently hire new staff could allow for the department to get better qualified employees. Qualified employees are in high demand and are less likely to be able to wait on a hiring decision under the current extended timeframes.

Reduce Reporting Requirements

- The Legislature should centralize, consolidate, and reduce reporting requirements on the Department of Public Safety to lessen the administrative burden on the staff. DPS currently is required to file roughly 30 annual reports. By reducing the administrative burden on staff they would have more time to focus on public safety and the jobs they were hired to do.

One Reporting System (TraCS)

- Several divisions within the Department of Public Safety use the TraCS system currently. It is the goal of the department to get all divisions using TraCS. Department wide use of one reporting system would create uniformity and ease of understanding across all divisions which would increase efficiencies. The use of TraCS would also lead to cost savings to the state because it is supported by the DOT. Without the use of TraCS our divisions would have to purchase and maintain costly software to meet each of their divisional needs.

The TraCS program is an initiative by the Iowa Department of Transportation to collect data from law enforcement at the scene of a motor vehicle collision and send that data electronically to the Iowa DOT. TraCS software and support is provided by the Iowa DOT to qualifying Iowa public safety agencies. Iowa DOT currently receives over 90 percent of crash data electronically from local and state law enforcement agencies. Nearly two thirds of citations written in Iowa are submitted electronically.

Targeted Enforcement

- Department offices should be strategically placed in areas where there is more exposure and accessibility to the public. By placing our offices in high traffic areas the Department of Public Safety is more efficiently able to serve the public's needs.
- The Department should target its enforcement efforts in the locations and in the services that the public most needs rather than one size fits all approach which simply focuses on covering a broad geographic region. We need to prioritize our services where they are most needed. This will help make the department more efficient and will reduce the cost of public safety. Also by specializing the resources that are deployed the Department can be more effective. We are focusing on working smarter not harder. An example of this is

being done in Drug and Narcotics enforcement where the agents are focusing on investigating the heads of drug rings rather than each individual user.

- We need to continue to have one intelligence gathering point because the benefit of shared information in solving crimes is invaluable. One clearinghouse for intelligence gathering is the most efficient way to disseminate intelligence throughout the state.

Restructuring

- We are restructuring the rank of certain employees to better fit their job responsibilities. By hiring individuals at an appropriate rank and pay grade we free up those in the higher ranks to complete work which is more suitable to their rank. This restructuring of classifications translates into a cost savings as well as more efficiency to the state.

Streamlining Purchases

- The Department of Public Safety is in the process of internally streamlining all of its purchases. Previously each division acted independently from other divisions in purchasing goods needed specifically for that division. Now we are internally coordinating purchases to procure a better purchase price on a larger department wide purchase. This internal coordination will result in cost savings to the state.

*The Department of Public Safety has a unique duty to protect the citizens of Iowa. Often given our unique circumstances efficiencies which might work for another agency do not work for the Department of Public Safety.

For example the Department of Public Safety deals with highly confidential information which requires special servers to store that information. This heightened server security may not be the most cost effective; however, it is necessary to ensure the safety of Iowans.

Another example is that of state vehicles. Although other agencies may be able to use highly energy efficient vehicle the Department of Public Safety has specific performance standards that need to be met. A State Trooper could not properly do his job if he were driving a low performance vehicle.

The Department respectfully requests that lawmakers take into consideration the Department of Public Safety's unique requirements before instituting a one size fits all cost saving measure that would be appropriate for other state agencies.

Boards and Commissions

The State Government Efficiency Review Committee requested that agency heads “review and offer recommendations to the committee and each agency’s respective budget subcommittee for the possible consolidation or elimination of boards and commissions within the purview of the agency.”

The Department of Public Safety is involved in several boards and commissions. They include the State Building Code Advisory Council, Electrical Examining Board, Fire Service and Emergency Response Council, Iowa Statewide Interoperable Communications System Board, Peace Officers’ Retirement Accident and Disability Systems Trustee, Law Enforcement Administrative Telecommunications Advisory Committee, and the Fire Extinguishing and Alarm System Certification Advisory Board.

The Department of Public Safety believes that all boards and commissions should be closely looked at, on an individual basis, to determine if they are necessary, appropriate, efficient, and effective.

The Legislature should also determine whether the boards and commissions are working within the scope of their codified legislative authority. Based on these determinations the legislature should take an appropriate course of action for each board or commission.